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GOVERNOR UNVEILS COMPREHENSIVE FOREST STRATEGY
First-of-its-kind 20-year plan outlines vision, action on forest health

PHOENIX – Governor Janet Napolitano today released the *Statewide Strategy for Restoring Arizona's Forests*, a comprehensive, 20-year plan to improve the health of Arizona's forests, bolster the sustainable use of forest resources for economic development, and reduce fire danger in the state's forested areas. The new strategy is the product of nearly two years of work between the Governor's Forest Health Advisory Council and Forest Health Oversight Council.

"Our forests are the lifeblood of many Arizona communities, and this 20-year statewide strategy is a first-of-its-kind approach to restoring our forests to the healthy condition we need," Governor Napolitano said. "This plan lays out actions for private, state, local and federal land managers to make our forests healthier on a statewide level. We've made a lot of progress on forest health in the past several years, but this plan is the biggest step yet, giving Arizona a comprehensive vision of forest health for decades to come."

With the *Statewide Strategy for Restoring Arizona's Forests*, Arizona becomes the first state in the nation to adopt a strategy that addresses forest health in a comprehensive, statewide manner. The new report aims to move beyond the different divisions of land managers – federal, state and private – and focus Arizona's forests on a single statewide vision.

The *Statewide Strategy* identifies the steps needed to increase the rate of forest restoration in Arizona, and presents localized areas of action for Arizona's diverse forest landscapes.

The 20-year vision for Arizona forests outlines five key strategies to restore the state's forestlands, including:

- Increasing the human and financial resources dedicated to forest restoration and community protection
- Coordinating and implementing action at the "landscape-scale"
- Increasing the efficiency of restoration, fire management and community protection activities
- Encouraging ecologically sustainable, forest-based economic activities
- Increasing public awareness of the need for forest health

The recommendations set action targets for federal, state and local governments, as well as private landowners.

The Governor will also issue an executive order combining the Forest Health Advisory Council and Forest Health Oversight Council into a new, unified Forest Health Council. The Governor acknowledged the work of the two previous councils, which fulfilled their duties under Executive Order 2003-16. The new Forest Health Council will be charged with implementation of the Statewide Strategy and will continue to serve in an advisory role on forest health issues.

“The health of our forests is vital to Arizona. Forests provide habitats for wildlife, play key roles in the health of many watersheds, and contribute to our quality of life by creating recreation, tourism and other economic development opportunities for our forested communities,” Napolitano said. “By making investments in forest health now we can lay a foundation for the future, prevent catastrophic wildfires and promote the sustainable use of forest resources. Our stewardship of Arizona’s forests today will strengthen our forested communities well into the future.”

The executive summary of the *Statewide Strategy* is attached.

For more information about the Office of the Governor, please visit www.azgovernor.gov.